



Best Practices 2000

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development MID-ATLANTIC EDITION

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<http://www.hud.gov/bestpractices.html>

ISSUE No. 2

Building a Better Tomorrow 2000

This second issue of Mid-Atlantic's Newsletter highlighting best practices in our area focuses on two equally important goals: "Empowering People and Communities" and "Restoring Public Trust."

Highlighting best practices is an excellent vehicle of empowerment by sharing activities which are effective in communities across our country. Our commitment to building a better future begins with acknowledging that strengthening our communities is a challenging and ever-changing process. What works totally for one community may only work partially for another — there is no "one shoe

fits all." It requires efforts by government, residents and professionals to engage in collaborative planning and action aimed at both problem solving and enrichment. The Best Practices showcased represent sustainable solutions based on knowing the facts, building on assets and sharing a vision.

Public trust is equally measured by how we conduct our business and ourselves. Just observe projects where funds have been spent efficiently, effectively, timely and in accord with statutes, regulations and policy — where inclusion is part and parcel of the decision-making process from the beginning. Unfortunately, far too

often, these "headliners" are not what make the headlines. We must all strive to maintain the integrity of our mission and be competent, sincere and steadfast as we go about our business — then our good actions will speak louder than the written word.



Mary Ann Wilson,
Acting Secretary's
Representative
Mid-Atlantic

We hope you continue to enjoy and to learn from this publication and use it to think of new ways to stretch the boundaries of your activities. Don't limit yourself by the sky. ♦

Effective Techniques of Top Performers!

Forty at Four: Revitalizing Maryland

Based in Baltimore, MD, the Forty at Four Initiative develops strategies for revitalizing high-poverty neighborhoods throughout the state by using HUD's CDBG and HOME funds. The initiative enables residents to obtain affordable housing. It works to stabilize at-risk neighborhoods by helping residents retain and improve their homes and by offering mortgage interest rates that attract new homebuyers to these areas. At present 287 loans totaling \$24.8 million have been disbursed.

Fran Makle and her team have formed partnerships with 15 local governments, HUD/FHA, community action agencies, local nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, and local realtors and lenders to achieve their goals. The most unique aspect of the Forty at Four initiative is the requirement that communities interested in obtaining assistance need to have two to three partners. Approximately 30 partners have been involved in the program to date.

Major communities have been revitalized with financial assistance

(see FORTY AT FOUR on page 3)

Revitalizing Green Spaces in Low-Income Neighborhoods

In Philadelphia, PA, abandoned lands in impoverished neighborhoods have become the focus of revitalization efforts aimed at building a community's sense of pride in a cleaner, safer environment. The New Kensington Community Development Corporation (NKCDC) implemented an "Open Space Management" program, a public-private partnership that improves and maintains vacant lands that might otherwise be used

(see GREEN SPACES on page 3)

Best Practices Focus Group Sessions

On February 3, 2000 HUD began hosting a series of Best Practices Focus Group sessions. These sessions bring together industry practitioners, management and other experts from housing program areas, along with HUD Best Practices Team members, to develop and refine models by which best practices can be identified, categorized, and utilized. There are two sides to the model equation that the Best Practices Team is addressing. The focus groups deal with the framework of the “What” side: What are the strategic objectives and key performance indicators; what are the critical success factors and major barriers to success; what are the desired results or outcomes of success? Individually and in total, these define what best practices are needed for. From them flow the second side of the model, the “How.” It is the best practices themselves that will populate the “How” side: How success is achieved, how barriers are overcome, how outcomes are measured and reviewed for continuous improvement, etc. The Focus Group sessions are, of course, not the only source of the

“What,” but they are a vital, necessary part in order to both identify the most relevant best practices, and most important of all be able to leverage them wherever practical for the most benefit of everyone.

A secondary, but also important, objective of these Focus Group sessions is to solicit input from the industry on “areas of need” within HUD programs for the provision of technical assistance. The information received on technical assistance will be used to develop high-value workshops for the 2000 Best Practices Symposium.

BEST PRACTICES FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Native American Programs	May 11, 2000
Community Development	May 18, 2000
Special Needs Housing	May 25, 2000
Rental Production (Hope VI, CDBG, HOME)	June 1, 2000
Youth Development	June 8, 2000
Resident Services	June 15, 2000
Rental Assistance/Section 8	June 22, 2000
Homeowner Rehabilitation	June 29, 2000

For more information, contact Neil Brown or Mary Barry on 202/708-1027.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Best Practices Symposium 2000

Mark Your Calendar!



August 7-10, 2000
Washington, DC

More Information Coming Soon! • 202,708,1027

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for illegal dumping or criminal activity in at-risk neighborhoods.

NKCDC works to transfer small pockets of vacant land to responsible landowners who promise to clean and maintain the property for side yards. Larger plots of land are transformed into community garden centers and other commercial enterprises. A community-based landscape maintenance program provides residents with the technical and financial support they need to ensure that these areas continue to beautify the community. At present, more than 150 abandoned properties have been transferred to responsible ownership, and 9.5 acres of land have been cleaned, and are being maintained and beautified.

NKCDC's program is unique in that it emphasizes improving the landscape and aesthetic beauty of high-poverty neighborhoods, rather

than focusing on social services or construction projects. Through these community gardens and privately maintained tracts, communities have become interested in the well-being of their environment. During a six-week period, the NKCDC constructed a garden center with potting stations, a retail nursery and a library with books and videos. The garden center also offers workshops and an after-school program. The Side Yards Program encourages homeowners to plant and maintain flowers and grass in the small lots between homes.

The NKCDC program received financial assistance in the form of CDBG grants from HUD and technical assistance from John Carpenter, now a Community Builder. Other key participants include: the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, which provided overall technical support and guidance along with the staff and resources to build the 10,000 square-foot garden center; Greensgrow Farms, a business that worked with EPA to clear regulatory obstacles; the Philadelphia Urban Resources Partnership, which helped develop linkages to public schools; the Lutheran Settlement House; and city agencies, which helped transfer parcels of land to responsible owners. This program is setting an example for the entire city of Philadelphia as it plans for the future of its abandoned land. ♦

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from this program. For example, the District Heights area in Prince George's County, MD, is now able to advertise refurbished vacant units to prospective homebuyers. In areas like District Heights, however, one of the chief obstacles of the program has been rehabilitating the existing property to make it habitable for existing owners or desirable to future buyers. Educating potential partners about the program and its value was also a challenge, but Forty at Four staff dealt with this issue by conducting extensive educational training sessions.

To date, 15 neighborhoods have received funding from the initiative. Furthermore the program has received substantial positive publicity from the media, including a press conference held by the governor of Maryland. In addition, the program earned the American Society of Landscape Architects & National Neighborhood Coalition award for their creative collaboration and financing efforts. ♦



Best Practices 2000

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Building A Better Tomorrow

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